



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## TYPES OF LATIN INSTRUCTION

---

By H. C. NUTTING  
The University of California

---

Among the devices suggested for improving the condition of Latin in the schools is the development of types of courses suited to the needs of various localities. Already, as a matter of fact, considerable attention has been given in some quarters to the attempt to work out a course in vocational Latin for students who have not the time or the aptitude for the regular course.

Unless all signs fail, we shall soon be called upon to decide whether to carry this programme to far greater lengths. In order to be prepared to make an intelligent decision, it will be necessary to look rather closely into the present school situation, lest haply, like the man mentioned in Scripture, we begin to build without first counting the cost.

These considerations have prompted a brief study of the Latin situation in the public high schools of the State of California. The materials are taken in large part from the Directory of Secondary Schools, issued annually by the State Board of Education. This Directory is not free from trifling errors; but it provides a solid foundation for some rather important conclusions.

The figures to be cited below are for the regular four-year public high school course. Intermediate schools, night schools, and commercial, polytechnic, and part time schools offering no Latin are omitted, as not contributing directly to the present purpose. With these eliminations, there still remains a solid block of about three hundred four-year high schools to serve as a basis of discussion.

To one who has followed conditions in California for years, the first outstanding fact that strikes the attention is the profound change that has been wrought in the school curriculum within

a comparatively short time. Among the larger schools, the following is a typical case: Seven years ago the enrollment was 691, with twenty-nine teachers. Four years of Latin were then taught, using the full time of one teacher and half the time of another, i. e., 5% of the teaching power of the school was devoted to Latin. Now the enrollment is 2037, with seventy teachers. Three years in Latin are offered, and a little over 2% of the teaching power of the school is expended on the subject.

It is quite possible that the *number* of students taking Latin in that school has not fallen off much in the course of the seven years; but the position of Latin itself has altered much for the worse. The fourth-year work appears to have been eliminated; and in dignity and importance in the curriculum Latin has declined 50%. Indeed the references to Latin are all but lost in a welter of Domestic Science and Art, Band, Orchestra, Commercial Bookkeeping, Stenography, Typewriting, Printing, Commercial Law, Auto Ignition and Repair, Home Economics, Drama, etc. The printed report naturally does not mention free election, athletics, the social whirl, and the thousand and one distractions that militate against the formation of studious habits.

It is a matter for wonder that anyone at all acquainted with what is going on in the schools should fail to see that the trouble with Latin lies in these changed conditions rather than in the method of teaching used. Beyond a doubt the public high school is becoming the "people's college," and there is more than a hint of danger that the studies essential to preparation for advanced scholarship will be accorded less and less favor there.

For even education is being invaded by the false democratic doctrine that majorities (however ignorant) are always right, and what is good enough for one is good enough for all. Unquestionably, in some places at least, there is a feeling against a type of education that aims to develop leaders through special training. This tendency of human nature is no new thing; Cicero notes (*Tusc. Disp.* v. 105) that the Ephesians expelled Hermodorus from their city because his presence accentuated their own mediocrity. Their verdict was: *Nemo de nobis unus*

*excellat; sin quis exstiterit, alio in loco et apud alios sit.* Commenting on this, Cicero adds: *An hoc non ita fit omni in populo? Nonne omnem exsuperantiam virtutis oderunt?*

The mischief is aggravated by the fact that certain educational leaders have set themselves the task of building up a philosophy that will appear to justify what "the public wants," in some such wise as divines long ago undertook to prove by Scripture that negroes have no souls, in order to justify the institution of human slavery. Here is the peril that threatens all real cultural education in the schools. With the ballot in the hands of uncultured multitudes who have no conception of the value and necessity of higher education, what is the outlook?

There are two ways, at least, in which this matter may be approached. One is to organize prominent people of real culture, and to put the weight of their united influence behind an insistent demand that the public schools, before all else, make adequate and secure provision for the kind of training that their ablest students need as a foundation for subsequent training. Dean West has already collected a considerable body of material that would be very useful in such a direct head-on attack upon the present evil tendencies in the school situation.

The other way is so to weaken and alter and disguise the old disciplines that they can be brought under the aegis of the cheap present day educational theory, catching an unwary student here and there. It is not unnatural that harassed teachers of Latin, with no broad outlook upon the general educational situation, should have turned in this direction in a desperate effort to meet the competition of the newer and easier subjects. And now we are confronted with a proposal to give up any attempt to teach real Latin to the rank and file of students, substituting therefor a course in applied "Latin," in which the emphasis shall be placed upon certain intensively cultivated byproducts, such as the derivation of English words. This certainly is a heroic remedy, if indeed it is a remedy and not abject surrender.

Before proceeding to a consideration of figures, one other point should be made. This can be illustrated by the history of a

smaller school, which seven years ago enrolled 241 students, with eleven teachers. At that time three years of Latin were taught, apparently with rotation of Cicero and Vergil, thus making it possible for a student to cover the four-year reading course. About 10% of the school's teaching power was devoted to this work. The enrollment is now 616, with twenty-two teachers. Two years of Latin are offered, using about 3% of the teaching force of the school.

The special point to be made, however, is that in this school, with enrollment of 616 students, there is no opportunity to take third and fourth-year Latin. Most students take beginning Latin and Caesar in their first two years; hence those who go on to college and wish to continue the study of Latin there are at a great disadvantage because of the interval of two years in which they have had no Latin. In California this presents a serious problem; for, of the public schools offering Latin, more than one-half do not carry the subject beyond the second year. In such schools there is obvious need to make the short course as rich as possible.

The following table gives a bird's eye view of the whole situation. In a few cases the total school enrollment was not given. Where exact figures are lacking, an estimate is made on the basis of the number of teachers on the staff.

| Total enrollment<br>of school | No. of schools | Years of Latin offered |       |        |        |        |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
|                               |                | 0 yrs.                 | 1 yr. | 2 yrs. | 3 yrs. | 4 yrs. |
| 19-99                         | 105            | 32                     | 30    | 40     | 3      | 0      |
| 100-199                       | 76             | 12                     | 9     | 45     | 6      | 4      |
| 200-299                       | 32             | 4                      | 3     | 20     | 4      | 1      |
| 300-399                       | 15             | 3                      | 1     | 7      | 2      | 2      |
| 400-499                       | 15             | 0                      | 1     | 7      | 6      | 1      |
| 500-599                       | 13             | 2                      | 0     | 4      | 6      | 1      |
| 600-699                       | 6              | 0                      | 0     | 3      | 0      | 3      |
| 700-799                       | 6              | 0                      | 0     | 1      | 2      | 3      |
| 800-899                       | 1              | 0                      | 1     | 0      | 0      | 0      |
| 900-999                       | 4              | 0                      | 0     | 0      | 2      | 2      |
| 1000-1999                     | 14             | 0                      | 0     | 1      | 3      | 10     |
| 2000-2999                     | 9              | 0                      | 0     | 0      | 2      | 7      |
| 3000-9735                     | 3              | 0                      | 0     | 1      | 0      | 2      |
|                               | 299            | 53                     | 45    | 129    | 36     | 36     |

In this table, the first line shows that there are 105 schools with a total enrollment under a hundred. Of these 32 offer no Latin, 30 have one year<sup>1</sup>, 40 two years, 3 three years, and none four years. The second line gives the statistics for the schools enrolling 100-199 pupils, etc.

Two outstanding facts are at once brought to light. First, that the schools with an enrollment under 300 stand in a group by themselves. Together they number 213 (more than two-thirds of the total), and only 18 of them carry Latin beyond the second year (it should be noted of course that 48 offer no Latin at all). Here is a very distinct problem.

The other fact appears at the end of the table in connection with the large city schools enrolling more than a thousand students. There are 26 such schools, only two of which offer as little Latin as two years; 5 have three years, and 19 the full four-year course.

The scattering vote of the schools lying between these two extremes does not appear to be significant, and the present discussion may well be confined to the two main groups.

If it should be proposed to carry on two types of Latin instruction simultaneously in the same school, the natural field for such an experiment would be sought in the 26 large city schools. For, outside that small group, the Latin enrollment probably would seldom be sufficient to justify such a subdivision. Indeed, within the group itself it is safe to assume offhand sufficient enrollment for this purpose; at any rate it is noted that in two of the schools offering the full four-year Latin course, a single teacher now handles all the work.

In the large group of small schools with total enrollment under 300, it must be obvious that only one type of Latin instruction could be supported by a given school. This brings the matter to a sharp issue. Shall we continue to teach Latin as such in these schools, or shall we, without a struggle, surrender to the com-

<sup>1</sup> This single year in several cases is not beginning Latin, but second or even third-year Latin. This would mean normally that beginners of an earlier year are being carried forward, though no new classes are organized in the subject.

mercial spirit of the times and put in a course in applied "Latin" that aims at something else than a mastery of the language?

It will be contended, doubtless, that there is no such sharp issue. Indeed we are bidden to hope that this applied "Latin" will prove as good a foundation as the standard course for those who wish to carry the study of Latin into subsequent years. But is there any real ground for such a hope? Certainly the teachers are now everywhere complaining that it is almost impossible to bring classes through on time. What would happen if they were obliged so to change their method as to give most of their attention to studies in the derivation of English words and the like? Let the experienced teachers of Latin answer.

If, for them, the program would be difficult or impossible, what shall we say of the people who teach Latin in the schools that have but a two-year course in that subject? Two Latin classes generally occupy less than half of a teacher's time, and it by no means follows that this work is put in the hands of a Latin specialist, who fills up a teaching schedule with other things. It is quite as apt to be the other way about, the teacher of some other subject "taking the Latin,"—often unwillingly, sometimes even with tears, because of conscious unfitness for the task.

These are not pleasant facts to consider; but the issues now being raised make it necessary to face them frankly. Under what conditions would teachers so circumstanced have the better chance to ground their classes in Latin? By allowing them to follow the charted standard course with which they were at some time themselves familiar, or by forcing them to attempt something that is beyond the power of all excepting a small group of specially trained and experienced teachers?

The standard method of teaching Latin is coming to be called "college Latin" to distinguish it from the applied varieties. If an extreme program were put through (as seems designed), it apparently would mean that applied Latin would be prescribed to the schools with enrollment large enough to justify only one type of instruction, provided that the majority of students did not intend to go to college.

If this plan were carried out, apparently the results for the state of California would be as follows: The great mass of the small schools with their two-year Latin course would be given over to applied Latin; and, under the teaching conditions there prevailing, little or nothing could be expected in the way of solid training in real Latin. If two types of instruction were instituted in schools with Latin enrollment sufficient to support the two, the standard course in real Latin would be restricted to part time in a small group of the large city schools.

This is a question that needs to be weighed with extreme care, remembering two things: First, that Dr. Eliot, one of the bitterest foes of Latin, has long advocated the restriction of Latin teaching to the larger schools, and, second, that it was by the loss of the smaller schools that Greek started on the downward way to the level it has now reached.

Shall we then abandon the small schools to pseudo-Latin? Or shall we hold to the old tried lines, endeavoring, of course, to make the work as rich and full as it is possible to make it for students who have but two years to devote to Latin?

It is quite likely that the situation in many of the Western states is more or less similar to the conditions in California. Possibly, too, in some states at least, materials are available for a study like this. If so, it is to be hoped that volunteers will look into the matter, in order that an intelligent choice may be made when the question of future policy comes up for settlement.